

February 27, 2013

The Honorable State Senator Terry Gerratana, Chair
The Honorable State Representative Susan Johnson, Chair
Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Opposition to HB 6157 An Act Concerning Personally Identifying Information on Certifications of Marriage and Death

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and other members of the Committee, on behalf of Reed Elsevier and its division LexisNexis, I am writing to express our opposition to HB 6157 AAC Personally Identifying Information on Certifications of Marriage and Death.

HB 6157 seeks to remove certain personally identifying information (hereinafter "PII") from death certificates when requested by individuals other than the funeral home, family members or physician of the deceased person. The stated purpose of the legislation is to prevent identity theft and fraud. However, we believe that removing PII from these vital public records will have the opposite effect by making it more difficult to determine and verify whether someone is actually deceased. Therefore, we oppose this legislation.

By way of background, LexisNexis is a recognized leader in information technology. We maintain one of the most comprehensive databases of public record information in the United States. The data we collect is used to support government, law enforcement and business customers who rely upon our information services to perform a myriad of functions that benefit and protect consumers. The exclusion of PII from death certificates would undermine the accuracy and integrity of the information we glean from these vital records, thereby frustrating numerous public policy and quality of life functions that are accomplished with them.

Below is an illustrative list of the critical role that death record data plays in public safety and consumer protection:

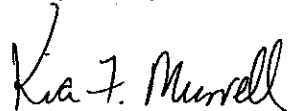
- Homeland Security and Law Enforcement
 - Key component of tools that help agencies identify, verify, and screen for crime suspects
 - Assists with counter-terrorism, cybercrime, and identity theft investigations
- Fraud Detection and Prevention in:
 - The opening of new bank accounts to prevent money laundering;
 - Applications for healthcare benefits (private insurance, Medicaid)
 - Social service programs (D-SNAP, disaster relief, unemployment, social security disability)
 - Applications for credit (e.g. credit cards, home loans and auto loans)
 - State and federal tax filings
- Payment of life insurance policy proceeds:
 - Used by insurers to identify deceased policyholders and pay proceeds to beneficiaries

We provide data from death certificates to many of the nation's law enforcement agencies, financial institutions and insurance companies in order to prevent fraud, protect consumers and combat crime. The usefulness of the death certificate is dependent upon the quantity and quality of the information provided therein to verify identity and differentiate among individuals with common attributes (i.e., name, address, date of birth). The loss of PII on state death certificates would dilute the accuracy and efficacy of these records as tools to verify and authenticate the identities of Connecticut residents.

At a time when state governments often lack the resources needed to detect, prevent and manage the misuse of identify information, it is more important than ever to maintain full access to the data contained on death certificates to prevent fraud. Simply stated, the data LexisNexis collects is a powerful tool for both public and private sector industries to prevent fraud, protect consumers, and combat crime. For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee to reject HB 6157.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation and I would be happy to entertain any questions that you may have about our position.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kia F. Murrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kia" being prominent.

Kia F. Murrell
Director of State Government Affairs